SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Information Bulletin #2000-1

Fire Alarm Function Testing (non-High Rise Buildings)

The Seattle Fire Code requires that building owners ensure fire alarm systems are tested on a periodic and regular basis. There are two types of tests, *Confidence* testing and *Function* testing.

This Bulletin is intended to supplement SFD Information Bulletin #971, **Confidence Testing**, which is available on the web at http://www.cityofseattle.net/fire/FMO/firecode/infobulletins/fmoBulletins.htm or at local fire stations. This bulletin is not intended to address fire alarm system testing in high rise buildings. High rises are generally defined as buildings more than six stories high. **Building owners** who wish to conduct fire alarm function tests themselves may do so in accordance with this bulletin.

Definitions

Confidence Test

An annual **(**and/or five year for some types of systems**)** test conducted by a person who holds a valid SFD certificate for testing fire alarm systems. The confidence test is an in-depth check of all aspects of the fire alarm system to ensure proper operation. In order to qualify as a confidence test, there may be no more than 12 months between tests.

Function Test

A test performed either quarterly by a person who holds a valid SFD certificate for testing fire alarms systems, or monthly by the building owner or building owner's representative.

General information on function testing is listed below. However, building owners need to be aware that each fire alarm system is unique. Fire alarm system activation may impact other building systems. It is the building owner's responsibility to ensure that fire alarm function testing does not adversely impact other fire and life safety features.

For specific requirements concerning the testing of your system, contact the alarm system manufacturer and your SFD certified fire alarm technician. Building owners should not perform function tests until they understand the specific requirements of their system.

Requirements for Function Test

Step 1

Take steps to ensure that conducting the function test will not result in a fire department response. All persons and facilities that will receive the alarm should be notified of the test prior to the test commencing (e.g. occupants, monitoring company, etc.).

Step 2

Post a fire watch. There must be a fire watch in place until the test is completed and the fire alarm system is restored to proper operation. Fire watch procedures must comply with SFD requirements for fire watches. Specific information on fire watch requirements is available in Seattle Fire Department Information Bulletin #991, FIRE WATCH available at local fire stations, or at http://www.cityofseattle.net/fire/FMO/firecode/infobulletins/fmoBulletins.htm on the internet.

Step 3

Conduct the function test. A monthly function test should include the following:
❑ Conduct a visual inspection of all components.
❑ Verify that all audible and visual devices operate properly (e.g. horns, bells, speakers, strobes, etc.).
❑ Verify that a back-up power source is in place and operational (e.g. batteries, generators, etc.).
❑ Inspect wiring connections for corrosion, breaks, chaffing, etc. *(over)*

❑ Check that all detection devices are present and are not damaged or impaired (e.g. obstructed by foreign matter such as paint and debris).
❑ Verify the alarm status by inspecting the indicator lights at the fire alarm panel (red = alarm, yellow = trouble, green = O.K.).
❑ Check that a copy of the building Emergency Operations Plan, or other required emergency response information, is at the fire alarm panel.
❑ Make sure a monthly test log is located and maintained at the fire alarm panel.

Step 4
Restore the fire alarm system. If the fire alarm system does not fully restore, or has failed any part of the monthly function test, immediately notify an SFD certified technician and arrange for a repair. The SFD must be notified immediately of fire alarm systems that are inoperable. Call (206) 233-7219 to report an inoperable system. A fire watch must be maintained until the fire alarm system is fully restored.

Step 5
Notify all persons and facilities that receive alarm activation that the test has been completed, and that monitoring should resume.

Step 6
Discontinue the fire watch.

Step 7
Document the test results on the monthly test log. The log should include site address, dates of function test, status of test and notes/problems, etc. This log should be located adjacent to the fire alarm panel in a readily visible location.

Sample Fire Alarm Test Log
12345 Main Street

Date	Tester	Status & Notes
5/1/00	John Doe	OK
6/1/00	Jane Doe	OK except corrosion on battery-called maintenance
7/1/00	John Doe	OK-corrosion removed by XYZ Fire Alarm
8/1/00	Jane Doe	OK

For More Information:
Fire Prevention Division   206.386.1450